TATIAN'S DIATESSARON
AND THE ARABIC AND PERSIAN HARMONIES

BY

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The thirteenth-century Persian Gospel Harmony, published by G. Messina with an Italian translation in 1951,¹ is recognized as quite a valuable source for the text of Tatian's Diatessaron. At the time of its translation from Syriac the Peshitta was the dominant version not only in Syria and Mesopotamia, but also in the Persian church. Yet, as with the better known Arabic Harmony, the text of the Persian Harmony, largely conformed to the Peshitta though it is, is far from being entirely assimilated to it. It is also recognized that, although the arrangement of the Persian Harmony differs widely from the Diatessaron order of the pericopae in the Arabic Harmony,² the two Harmonies are in many places closely related in text, and not infrequently contain pre-Peshitta and Tatianic readings.³

The purpose of the present study is to provide, in collation form, the basic comparative material for the evaluation of the two Harmonies of the eastern tradition alongside the primary western Harmonies, Ephraem's quotations from the Diatessaron in his Commentary on it (now available in the original Syriac, although not completely),

¹ G. Messina, Diatessaron Persiano (Biblica et Orientalia 14; Rome : Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1951) : cited as Messina; see also his Notizia su un Diatessaron persiano tradotto dal siraco (Biblica et Orientalia 10 : Rome, 1943).
the Old Syriac, the Peshitta,\(^4\) and the Armenian\(^5\) and Georgian\(^6\) versions. The first chapter of the gospel of Luke has been chosen as a beginning.\(^7\) The collation is followed by a detailed analysis.

The base is the textus receptus.\(^8\) Variants in the Arabic and Persian columns are nearly always cited in Greek, even when unsupported by any known Greek witness. Some of the variants are more a matter of Syriac translation phenomena than true variants, but these are a significant factor in Diatessaron-Forschung.

An unusual feature of the collation is the inclusion of the fourteenth-century(?) Vienna Arabic manuscript of the separate gospels edited by Lagarde (= V) more than a century ago and recently reprinted.\(^9\) Some of its readings are sufficiently interesting to merit special mention (see Analysis III.ii). In cases of agreement with the Arabic Harmony the vocabulary of V is, of course, often different.

Sigla used in the collation

- arab: Arabic Diatessaron\(^10\)
- AB(E)O: mss. of arab\(^11\)


\(^7\) The present collation supersedes the slighter one in the first part of my article of 1959 in Studia Evangelica 796-800.

\(^8\) H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ (Oxford, 1873; photographic offset by University of Chicago Press, n. d.).


\(^11\) A, thirteenth or fourteenth century; the other mss., B (sixteenth century?), E (A. D. 1795), and O (A. D. 1806, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford) are derived from a